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INFO RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 3342  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 001761

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND DRL

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [UZ](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHED CONTACT TO SEEK ASYLUM IN BISHKEK

Classified By: POLOFF R. FITZMAURICE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) At an Embassy event on October 9, dissident academic and human rights contact Tashpulat Yuldashev told poloff that he planned to flee Uzbekistan in the next few days and seek political asylum with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Bishkek. He requested that poloff inquire whether he could be granted political asylum in the United States. Yuldashev also told poloff that Free Farmers Party leader Nigara Khidoyatova has agreed to support him financially in Bishkek while he applies for asylum.

¶2. (C) Yuldashev is loosely affiliated with the Human Rights Alliance in Tashkent and is a frequent commentator for Radio Free Europe. He is a former Soviet diplomat and worked for the Uzbek MFA for several years before being fired for unknown reasons. In August, Yuldashev provided poloff and the German Embassy copies of a long analytical treatise on the necessity of political and economic reform in Uzbekistan that he planned to have published abroad. Yuldashev was afraid of the Government's reaction to the work, and told poloff at that time that he was considering seeking asylum in a third country. Yuldashev has a son who currently works in Moscow, and he is afraid that he may become a target for retaliation by the Uzbek or Russian secret services.

TURLIBEKOV ALSO REPORTEDLY IN BISHKEK  
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¶3. (C) Yuldashev is only the latest of several human rights activists and religious figures to seek political asylum abroad in the past year. For example, in September, several independent websites reported that human rights activist Yodgor Tulibekov fled Uzbekistan. According to human rights activist Surat Ikramov, Turlibekov is currently applying for political asylum with UNHCR in Bishkek and fled Uzbekistan after authorities in Kashkadarya province threatened to arrest him again for continuing his human rights report. Turlibekov also was reportedly detained by police in May and accused of orally insulting the honor and dignity of President Karimov. In October 2006, he was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for insult and slander after he reportedly distributed leaflets critical of government policy. He was subsequently amnestied in December 2006

¶4. (C) Comment: Yuldashev has been an established contact of the Embassy for several years on internal politics and human rights issues. Yuldashev occasionally overrates himself and expressed little doubt that the United States will grant him political asylum despite warnings from poloff that the United States does not grant asylum to individuals at its foreign embassies. Poloff also warned Yuldashev that he may have to wait a long time in Bishkek to be granted UNHCR refugee mandate status.

